

# Health Alert

October 23, 2001

**FROM: MAUREEN E. DEMPSEY, M.D.  
DIRECTOR**

**SUBJECT: CDC Recommendations on Antibiotic Prophylaxis for  
Workers and Visitors to Washington DC Processing  
and Distribution Center**

The Department of Health and Senior Services is forwarding the following information from CDC. Please contact the Department if you have any questions at 1-800-392-0272.

Distributed Via Health Alert Network

October 23, 2001 02:27 EDT (2:27 AM EDT)

- > CDC Recommendations on Antibiotic Prophylaxis for Workers and Visitors to
- > the Washington, D.C. Processing and Distribution Center, 900 Brentwood
- > Road and the Mail Handling Center, Cargo Road, Anne Arundel County,
- > Maryland

- > All employees of and visitors to the Washington, D.C. Processing and
- > Distribution Center, 900 Brentwood Road and the Mail Handling Center,
- > Cargo Road, Anne Arundel County, near the Baltimore-Washington
- > International Airport since October 10th should begin antibiotic
- > prophylaxis for possible exposure to B. anthracis (anthrax). It is
- > believed that these individuals could have been exposed to the bacterium.
- > \* These individuals should receive antibiotic prophylaxis for 10 days,
- > with continuation determined by the Washington, D.C. Health Department and
- > the Maryland and Virginia State Health Departments.

- > \* These individuals should not be tested for exposure to B. anthracis
- > with nasal swabs. Nasal swabs are used primarily for epidemiologic
- > investigation and not for individual diagnosis, prophylaxis, or treatment.
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- > \* Nasal swabs are also not recommended for testing people at potential
- > risk who are currently away from the Washington, D.C. area. Again, such
- > tests are not used to determine the need for prophylaxis among people who
- > are potentially exposed.

- > The Deputy Postmaster General is currently contacting employees about
- > beginning prophylaxis. People who meet the criteria for potential risk and
- > are currently away from the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area should
- > contact their local or state health department to receive prophylaxis.
- > CDC requests that state health departments do the following:

- > · Facilitate access to antibiotic prophylaxis if they are contacted.

- > · Initiate a system for recording the names of and tracking those
- > individuals for follow-up purposes in the event they develop signs or
- > symptoms consistent with anthrax.

- > · Contact CDC at (770) 488-7100 and request the State Liaison Desk to
- > report names and contact information of people determined to be at
- > potential risk who are currently away from the Washington, D.C.
- > metropolitan area.

- > CDC's investigation is ongoing. Future modifications to these
- > recommendations may occur on the basis of epidemiologic and laboratory
- > information. Additional modifications and any new information will be
- > posted.

## How to contact us:

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**CDC**

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DISEASE CONTROL  
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